

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

5 1. A method for estimating wait times within a hold queue comprising:

estimating a plurality of call times individually for a plurality of calls within a call center;

positioning a particular call received from a caller at said call center within a hold queue; and

estimating a wait time in said hold queue for said particular call according to said plurality of call times individually estimated for said plurality of calls within said call center.

20 2. The method for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 1, wherein estimating a plurality of call times further comprises:

estimating said plurality of call times according to at least one from among an average time per representative, an average time per caller, and an activity participated in by a selection of said plurality of callers waiting in said hold queue.

3. The method for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 2, wherein said average time per representative is further specified according to at least one from among a time of day and a subject.

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4. The method for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 2, wherein said average time per caller is further specified according to at least one from among an average time with representatives across a plurality of call centers, an average time with a particular representative, an average time for a subject, and an average time of a total call within said call center.

5. The method for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 2, wherein said activity participated in by a selection of said plurality of callers comprises at least one from among a third party call, a competition, a survey, an expert session, and an entertainment service.

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6. The method for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving said plurality of calls each authenticated by a  
5 caller identifier;

requesting a plurality of caller profiles for each of said plurality of calls according to said authenticated caller identifiers, wherein contents of said plurality of caller profiles are compiled by at least one call center; and

responsive to receiving said plurality of caller profiles, estimating said plurality of call times according to previous average time usage of said at least one call center as indicated in said plurality of caller profiles.

7. The method for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 1, further comprising:

20 publishing said wait time to an interface selected by said caller.

8. The method for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 7, wherein publishing said wait time further 25 comprises:

publishing a plurality of criteria utilized to estimate said plurality of call times.

9. The method for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 1, wherein a selection of said plurality of calls are currently waiting in said hold queue.

5 10. The method for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 1, wherein a selection of said plurality of calls are currently being assisted by a plurality of representatives within said call center.

10 11. The method for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 1, further comprising:

15 updating a caller profile server according to a session for said particular call according to an authenticated identifier for a caller, wherein said caller profile server maintains a plurality of caller profiles stored according to a plurality of authenticated identifiers for compiling information about sessions at at least one call center.

12. A method for estimating wait times at a call center,  
comprising:

receiving a plurality of calls authenticated by a plurality  
5 of caller identifiers at a call center;

*Suff A* > receiving a plurality of caller profiles associated with  
said plurality of caller identifiers, wherein said plurality of  
caller profiles comprise time averages for said plurality of  
callers while previously on hold at at least one call center; and

estimating a wait time for a particular caller waiting in a  
hold queue from among said plurality of callers according to said  
time averages for said plurality of callers.

13. The method for estimating wait times at a call center  
according to claim 12, wherein said plurality of caller profiles  
are received from at least one profile server, wherein said at  
least one profile server is accessible to a plurality of call  
centers.

14. A system for estimating wait times within a hold queue,  
comprising:

a call center for receiving a plurality of calls;

5 means for estimating a plurality of call times individually  
for said plurality of calls;

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means for positioning a particular call received from a  
caller at said call center within a hold queue; and

55 means for estimating a wait time in said hold queue for said  
particular call according to said plurality of call times  
individually estimated for said plurality of calls within said  
call center.

15 15. The system for estimating wait times within a hold queue  
according to claim 14, wherein said means for estimating a  
plurality of call times further comprises:

20 20. means for estimating said plurality of call times according  
to at least one from among an average time per representative, an  
average time per caller, and an activity participated in by a  
selection of said plurality of callers waiting in said hold  
queue.

25 25. The system for estimating wait times within a hold queue  
according to claim 15, wherein said average time per  
representative is further specified according to at least one  
from among a time of day and a subject.

17. The system for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 15, wherein said average time per caller is further specified according to at least one from among an average 5 time with representatives across a plurality of call centers, an average time with a particular representative, an average time for a subject, and an average time of a total call within said call center.

18. The system for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 15, wherein said activity participated in by a selection of said plurality of callers comprises at least one from among a third party call, a competition, a survey, an expert session, and an entertainment service.

19. The system for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 14, further comprising:

means for receiving said plurality of calls each 20 authenticated by a caller identifier;

means for requesting a plurality of caller profiles for each of said plurality of calls according to said authenticated caller identifiers, wherein said plurality of caller profiles are 25 compiled by at least one call center; and

means responsive to receiving said plurality of caller profiles, for estimating said plurality of call times according to previous average time usage of said at least one call center

as indicated in said plurality of caller profiles.

20. The system for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 14, further comprising:

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means for publishing said wait time to an interface selected by said caller.

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caller profile server maintains a plurality of caller profiles stored according to a plurality of authenticated identifiers for compiling information about sessions at at least one call center.

25. A computer program product for estimating wait times within  
5 a hold queue, said computer program product comprising:

*Suzy A.J.* a recording medium;

10 means, recorded on said recording medium, for estimating a plurality of call times individually for a plurality of calls;

means, recorded on said recording medium, for positioning a particular call received from a caller within a hold queue; and

15 means, recorded on said recording medium, for estimating a wait time in said hold queue for said particular call according to said plurality of call times individually estimated for said plurality of calls within said call center.

20 26. The computer program product for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 24, wherein said means for estimating a plurality of call times further comprise:

means, recorded on said recording medium, for estimating 25 said plurality of call times according to at least one from among an average time per representative, an average time per caller, and an activity participated in by a selection of said plurality of callers waiting in said hold queue.

27. The computer program product for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 24, further comprising:

means, recorded on said recording medium, for enabling receipt of said plurality of calls each authenticated by a caller identifier;

means, recorded on said recording medium, for requesting a plurality of caller profiles for each of said plurality of calls according to said authenticated caller identifiers, wherein said plurality of caller profiles are compiled by at least one call center; and

means, recorded on said recording medium, estimating said plurality of call times according to previous average time usage of said at least one call center as indicated in said received plurality of caller profiles.

28. The computer program product for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 24, further comprising:

means, recorded on said recording medium, for controlling output said wait time to an interface selected by said caller.

29. The computer program product for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 27, wherein said means for publishing said wait time further comprises:

5       means, recorded on said recording medium, for controlling output a plurality of criteria utilized to estimate said plurality of call times.

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10      30. The computer program product for estimating wait times within a hold queue according to claim 24, further comprising:

15       means, recorded on said recording medium, for updating at least one caller profile server according to a session for said particular call according to an authenticated identifier for a caller, wherein said at least one caller profile server maintains a plurality of caller profiles stored according to a plurality of authenticated identifiers for compiling information about sessions at at least one call center.

31. A method for monitoring caller on hold characteristics, comprising:

receiving monitored on hold characteristics according to a  
5 caller identifier of a caller from at least one call center at  
said caller which has waited in a hold queue from among a  
plurality of call centers communicatively connected to a caller  
profile server;

10 computing on hold statistics for said caller across at least  
one from among said plurality of call centers from said monitored  
on hold characteristics in said caller profile;

15 responsive to a request for said caller profile according to  
said caller identifier, distributing said computed on hold  
statistics for said caller, such that said plurality of call  
centers are enabled to estimate wait times within a hold queue  
comprising said caller.

32. A system for monitoring caller on hold characteristics, comprising:

a caller profile server communicatively connected to a plurality of call centers;

means for receiving monitored on hold characteristics according to a caller identifier of a caller from at least one call center at which said caller has waited in a hold queue from among said plurality of call centers;

means for computing on hold statistics for said caller across at least one from among said plurality of call centers from said monitored on hold characteristics in said caller profile; and

means, responsive to a request for said caller profile according to said caller identifier, for distributing said computed on hold statistics for said caller.